



July 11, 2007

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lamar S. Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard L. Berman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet
and Intellectual Property
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard Coble
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Courts, the
Internet and Intellectual Property
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairman Conyers, Chairman Berman, Senator Specter, Representative Smith,
and Representative Coble:

As President of the Illinois Information Technology Association, I am writing to commend you on your continued work to update our nation's patent system via the Patent Reform Act of 2007. I ask that you enact the legislation as soon as possible to support Illinois' growing technology sector with a clearer patent system that will support innovation and bolster our position in the global economy.

Innovation must be encouraged and protected to promote a thriving IT sector. Current patent law stifles our ability to innovate by encouraging abuse of the legal system through court-clogging lawsuits, forum shopping and incongruous damage awards that threaten our ability to do business. The Patent Reform Act will strengthen our nation's patent system and allow innovation to flourish while at the same time protecting the rights of innovators.

The current patent system has spurred lengthy and expensive litigation for IT companies. The number of patent lawsuits nearly tripled between 1991 and 2004 and grew nearly 20 percent between 2001 and 2005. These court cases are both time-consuming and expensive when legal fees, pre-trial settlements and final decisions are taken into account.

Recent reports from the National Academy of Sciences and the Council on Foreign Relations have analyzed how imbalances in the patent system are harming our competitive position in the worldwide economy. Our nation's leading legal scholars and economists have also spoken out in support of patent reform. Under so much scrutiny, this is a clear signal that the technology landscape has changed dramatically since Congress last amended the patent process and it is obvious that we need to readdress these issues.

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Enacting the Patent Reform Act of 2007 will boost our ability to compete in the technology sector, spur economic growth, and foster greater investment, job creation and innovation in Illinois and across the country. I respectfully urge you to enact this much needed legislation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Hoch".

Fred Hoch
President
Illinois IT Association

Cc: Co-sponsors of the Patent Reform Act of 2007
Members of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate